

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SECTION

799 E. Rialto Avenue, San Bernardino, CA. 92415-0011

IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM 1-800-722-4794.....Fax (909) 386-8325

TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL 1-800-722-4794.....Fax (909) 387-2861

EPIDEMIOLOGY 1-800-722-4794.....Fax (909) 386-8325

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Pooneh Navab, Health Educator

1-800-722-4794

Immunization Program

May is National Hepatitis Awareness Month

Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent certain hepatitis viruses and diseases in the human body. Many people with hepatitis A, B or C do not know they are infected and/or have the disease. Awareness is the first step in protecting yourself and others against hepatitis.

Hepatitis is a disease that harms the liver and is caused by several different viruses. The liver is an important organ because it helps digest food, store energy, and remove poisons from the body. Hepatitis causes the liver to swell or inflame which stops it from working properly.

Hepatitis A, B, and C are the three most common types of viral hepatitis found in the United States. Hepatitis is a major public health concern in the United States and around the world because the disease is spread from person to person. Symptoms of hepatitis can include yellowing of the skin and/or eyes, nausea, diarrhea and vomiting, tiredness, pain in muscles, joints and stomach, and loss of appetite. County residents can protect themselves and prevent the spread of hepatitis to others.

Hepatitis A, B, and C are caused by separate viruses and spread to people in different ways:

- **Hepatitis A** is usually spread through contaminated food or water, which may be due to poor hand washing/personal cleanliness, but can also be spread by having unprotected sex with an infected person. **Vaccine is available to protect individuals against hepatitis A.**
- **Hepatitis B (and in some cases hepatitis C)** is spread through blood and bodily fluids when having unprotected sex with an infected person. **Vaccine is available to protect individuals against hepatitis B, but not hepatitis C.**
- **Hepatitis B and C** are spread by direct contact with blood when sharing needles (or other drug equipment) with an infected person, and can also be passed from an infected mother to her newborn child before or during birth.
- **Hepatitis B and C** may also be spread when sharing or coming in contact with personal objects such as razors or toothbrushes with someone who is infected.

If you are at risk and would like further information, or to make a vaccination appointment, contact your physician or the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health at 1-800-722-4777, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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Chief Executive Officer

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